

UK STATISTICS AUTHORITY

Regulation Committee

Minutes

Thursday 13 October 2022

**Virtual Meeting, Microsoft Teams
13:00 – 14:55**

Members Present

Professor Anne Trefethen (Chair)
Helen Boaden
Sir Robert Chote
Richard Dobbs
Professor Jonathan Haskel
Ed Humpherson
Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter

Other Attendees

Emily Carless
Penny Babb (Item 6)
Emily Carless
Kirsty Garratt (Item 8)
Marie McGhee (Items 4 & 5)
Helen Miller-Bakewell
Mark Pont
Anna Price (Item 7)
Gail Rankin
Vicky Stone (Shadowing)
Siobhan Tuohy-Smith (Item 4)

Secretariat

Lauren Bradley
Sally-Ann Jones

Apologies

None

Declarations of Interest

None

1. Apologies, minutes and matters arising

- 1.1 Members were welcomed to the meeting. The minutes of the meeting on 7 July were agreed, and actions were reviewed.

2. Update from the Director General for Regulation

- 2.1 Ed Humpherson provided an update on regulation activity since the last meeting highlighting that recruitment was an area of focus with OSR in the process of filling a number of vacancies including the Deputy Director for Regulation post.
- 2.2 In September the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) had delivered a seminar for government analysts on communicating uncertainty with over 400 people in attendance, and Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter as a speaker. The event was accompanied by OSR's Insight Report on communication uncertainty. In October OSR had delivered a further seminar on data sharing and linkage. OSR had published a number of reports including Guidance for Models: Trustworthiness, Quality and Value and the State of the Statistics System, both of which had high public interest.
- 2.3 Following a number of concerns from members of the public regarding a Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy consultation on Weights and Measure, OSR had published a statement in the form of a blog.
- 2.4 Members heard that OSR was working with Office for national Statistics (ONS) colleagues to undertake a rapid review of the updated estimates of Business Enterprise Research and Development statistics that had been published in September, following some joint work with HM Revenue and Customs.
- 2.5 Members approved the proposal to publish the draft assessment report on deaths in the care sector and confirmed National Statistics (NS) Designation for the ONS living costs and food survey and Home Office's police officer uplift statistics.

3. OSR Performance and Maturity Model

- 3.1 Ed Humpherson presented a mid-year update on the progress against OSR's 2022/23 business plan and five year-strategy, and the current risk profile. The paper set out arrangements for the 2023/24 planning cycle, and how OSR would engage with the Committee at key stages.
- 3.2 It was noted that OSR was confident that ambitions would be achieved, despite resource limitations. Members discussed the variations between current and previous compliance activities. Members also explored options around being more ambitious and ways to effectively measure success.
- 3.3 The Committee agreed the need to maintain public confidence and trust in evidence. It was acknowledged that there was scope to build on the responsiveness of the compliance check program. Members were assured that recruitment gaps were progressing.

4. Population and Migration Statistics Update

- 4.1 Siobhan Tuohy-Smith and Marie McGhee introduced a paper which provided an update on the ONS' current work streams for measuring the population. It was noted that while there had been good progress, concerns remained around the timeliness and the breadth of user engagement across the transformation programme.
- 4.2 Members discussed the paper and highlighted the need for further transparency and wider user engagement by the ONS on the transformation of its population and migrations statistics. Members also noted the need for the ONS to publish a document outlining the current position of the work.
- 4.3 Members noted thanks to the OSR team for the paper and would continue to remain engaged as the work progressed.

5. Scottish Census

- 5.1 Marie McGhee updated members on the progress of Scotland's Census 2022 and shared plans for reporting publicly on the work by National Records of Scotland (NRS). It was noted that Mark Pont had observed an International Steering Group meeting.
- 5.2 Members discussed areas of work that were ongoing, including admin data and code compliance and noted the need to set out clear expectations for NRS. Members also discussed options around further user and stakeholder engagement.
- 5.3 The Committee approved OSR's plans and timing for publication of OSR's Phase Two assessment report, noting the need to frame the recommendations in the right way. The report would be scheduled for discussion by the Regulation Committee ahead of publication with a further update scheduled at the meeting in December.

6. National Statistics Designation

- 6.1 Penny Babb introduced a paper which provided an update on OSR's ongoing project to refresh the NS designation process. It was noted that the aim was to reframe the process to improve its usefulness and to better assist producers and users. It was further noted that the team had worked with content designers to deliver a clear process which addressed any ambiguity.
- 6.2 During discussion members noted the need for clear messaging throughout the process and to clarify to users what the process could and could not be used for. Members also suggested incorporating timestamps into the process.
- 6.3 Members discussed the options and agreed that further discussions were needed to ensure the optimal approach was taken forward.

7. COVID-19 Lessons Learned

- 7.1 Anna Price introduced a paper which provided an update on OSR's follow-up report on lessons learned for health and social care statistics during the pandemic. It was noted that there had been high public, political and media interest in OSR's work around the COVID-19 Lessons Learned report published in October 2021.
- 7.2 Members heard that the main focus of the report was on building trustworthiness and quality of statistics, while improving the robustness of the system for future challenges. During discussion, members noted the challenges posed by Twitter.
- 7.3 Members endorsed the report and commended the OSR team on a clear well-structured report.

8. Casework Report

- 8.1 Emily Carless presented the near final Annual Review of Authority Casework 2021/22 report and outlined the recommended communications strategy. It was noted that casework levels remained high, and a focus was on transparency and role-modelling.
- 8.2 Members endorsed the report and were content with the proposed communications strategy.

9. Horizon Scanning

- 9.1 Ed Humpherson facilitated a discussion on Horizon Scanning. It was noted that OSR were looking at incorporating a best practice plan into the 2023 Business Plan, which would cover all aspects of statistics.
- 9.2 Members discussed key pieces of work that should report to the Committee, including an update on the work around Sex and Gender data. Members were also interested in a discussion around economic statistics and the Labour Market Survey.
- 9.3 It was agreed that an update on police crime statistics would come to the Committee in December.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 The Committee's agreed OSR's proposal to close the review of adult social care statistics, while maintaining regulatory oversight of social care statistics.
- 10.2 The Committee would meet next on Thursday 1 December at 13:00.